

## TNReady: English Language Arts Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. *What is the best way to prepare students for TNReady?*

TNReady is a new and improved TCAP assessment for English language arts (ELA) and math. TNReady is aligned to the Tennessee State Standards, which are the learning expectations for students in every grade level and content area. The best preparation for TNReady is strong instruction throughout the year rooted in our state standards, including an understanding of the three instructional shifts highlighted in the standards (discussed in #2). On the TNReady ELA assessment, students will be asked text-dependent<sup>1</sup>, grade-appropriate questions. We encourage educators to provide students with frequent opportunities to engage with complex texts and answer text-dependent questions.

### 2. *What are the three instructional shifts?*

The three instructional shifts for ELA are **knowledge**, **evidence**, and **vocabulary**.

- 1) **Knowledge:** Students build background knowledge through content-rich informational and nonfiction texts.
- 2) **Evidence:** Reading, writing, and speaking are grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational.
- 3) **Vocabulary:** Students have regular practice with complex texts and academic language.

### 3. *What is the expected length for student writing on TNReady?*

While, in general, a multi-paragraph response is appropriate, the *length* of the response is less important than the *quality* of the response. Students should respond completely to the task.

### 4. *How can I score the writing tasks?*

The rubrics for the writing tasks are available on the department website ([here](#)).

### 5. *Which writing modes should my students be practicing?*

Students should practice all types of writing. On TNReady, students will be asked to write essays from two of the following three modes of writing (in any combination): (1) argument/opinion, (2) informative/explanatory, and (3) narrative. For example, a student could receive an argument/opinion task *and* a narrative task. Or, a student could receive an informative/explanatory task *and* an argument/opinion task. Or, a student could receive an informative/explanatory task *and* a narrative task.

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<sup>1</sup> Text-dependent questions require a close, careful reading of a grade-appropriate, complex text. The answer is found in the text, not from background or outside knowledge.

**6. Where can I find practice writing tasks?**

Between MICA and MIST, students have a minimum of three tasks per grade with all writing modes represented within each grade band (i.e., grades 3-5, grades 6-8, and English I-III). The table below has a breakdown of the writing tasks available for each grade level.

Grade	MICA Item Sampler	MIST Practice Test
3	2 Informative/explanatory tasks 1 narrative task	1 narrative task
4	2 informative/explanatory tasks	1 narrative task
5	1 opinion task 1 informative/explanatory task	1 narrative task
6	1 argument task 2 informative/explanatory tasks	1 narrative task
7	3 informative/explanatory tasks	1 narrative task
8	1 argument task 2 informative/explanatory tasks	1 informative/explanatory task
English I	3 argument tasks 1 narrative task	1 informative/explanatory task
English II	2 informative/explanatory tasks	1 narrative task
English III	2 informative/explanatory tasks	1 narrative task

**7. Are all writing tasks on the TNReady assessment being scored?**

Yes, all writing tasks will be scored. Narrative writing is being field tested this year, and while it *will* be scored, the score will be used for internal purposes only in order to develop future test questions.

**8. Why are narrative writing tasks included in MICA and MIST if they don't "count"?**

Narrative writing is an expectation of the Tennessee State Standards for ELA. Students are expected to learn the three modes of writing, including narrative. Together, MICA and MIST provide sample items for all standards that are assessed, both field-test and operational items.

**9. I thought all writing had to be text-dependent. How can we have narrative tasks that are text-dependent and not basic "creative writing" tasks?**

On TNReady, *all* writing students will be asked to produce is text-dependent, even narrative writing. For narrative writing tasks, students will be asked to use the prompting text in order to develop their story using effective techniques, such as including relevant descriptive details and providing a well-structured event sequences. Thus, a strong narrative essay requires a close read of text to gather the details to make the story cohesive. For example, students may be asked the following: to write a narrative from the point of view from a character in the text; to write the ending or beginning of a narrative text; or, to write a narrative story after reading informational texts. All of these narrative writing tasks require a close reading of the complex text provided. Students do not need to bring background knowledge to the narrative tasks, but they will be asked to use relevant details from the prompting text to complete the task.

**10. Do MICA and MIST hold students to the same expectations? I heard MICA was easier.**

MICA and MIST hold students to the same high expectations that will be assessed on TNReady. The items included on both MICA and MIST are chosen from the same bank of items as the operational TNReady assessment.

**11. How should I use MICA?**

You should use MICA to gauge student learning and to increase their comfort with the test design and online platform. MICA has between 50-70 items per grade, displays the full range of standards, and is continuously available online (<http://www.micatime.com>).

**12. Where else can I find other practice items similar to the items that will be asked on TNReady?**

The only state-approved places to find items similar in style to TNReady are MICA and MIST. The items for the TNReady operational test, the MICA item sampler, and the MIST sample test come from the same item bank, which has been reviewed by Tennessee educators. Because all items come from the same bank, we are able to say that the items on MICA and MIST are the closest to TNReady items.

**13. Is there a list of Tier II/academic vocabulary words?**

No, there is not a list of Tier II/academic vocabulary words. On TNReady, students are expected to determine the meaning of vocabulary words based on the context of the grade-appropriate text. As such, any word within the text that can be defined based on context is fair game for assessment.

**14. Wait. If there's no list of Tier II/academic vocabulary words, how can I teach my students the words they need to know to pass TNReady?**

The best way to prepare students for success with academic vocabulary on TNReady is by teaching close reading of complex texts. During close reading of complex texts, students should practice determining the meaning of Tier II/ academic vocabulary words based on the context.

**15. What is a "passing" or proficient score for the writing tasks?**

The scoring for writing tasks will be determined during the rangefinding process. Rangefinders are Tennessee educators who will work with the Tennessee Department of Education to score actual student writing samples against the state standards and the writing rubrics in order to set expectations at each score point. These guidelines will then be used to score *all* student responses.

**16. How can I score the narrative writing tasks since we don't have sample papers?**

Until the range-finding process is complete, the best way to score all writing tasks is to reference the Tennessee State Standards and the writing rubrics.